AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) An electronic control system comprising:

first and second microcomputers programmed to control a first object and a second object, respectively;

the first microcomputer having a monitor program for checking a malfunction of the second microcomputer at a predetermined interval;

the first microcomputer including timer means and timer setting means;

the timer means counting time and switching an output logic level of a port when a time count reaches a predetermined value; and

the timer setting means setting a new time count in place of the time counted by the timer means when the second microcomputer is operating normally and the monitor program is executed normally,

wherein the timer setting means monitors an interval of executing the monitor program and sets the new time count when that interval is within ~~an acceptable range~~a predetermined time range having a beginning time point and an end time point.

2. (previously amended) An electronic control system as in claim 1, wherein:

the timer means decreases the time count and switches the output logic level when the time count reaches zero; and

the timer setting means sets a new time count which is longer than the predetermined interval for executing the monitor program.

3. (previously amended) An electronic control system as in claim 1, wherein:

the monitor program determines whether a calculating result by the second microcomputer is normal, and determines whether start timing and end timing monitor program execution is normal or whether execution procedure of the monitor program is in order; and

the timer setting means sets the new time count when the first and second determination are affirmative.

4. (cancelled)

5. (previously amended) An electronic control system as in claim 1, wherein:

the second microcomputer executes an electronic throttle control process; and

the first microcomputer stops electronic throttle control when the time count reaches the predetermined value.

6. (currently amended) An electronic control method for a system having a first microcomputer and a second microcomputer, the first microcomputer including a monitor program and a timer, the electronic control method comprising:

monitoring, by the first microcomputer, an operation of the second microcomputer based on the monitor program at successive predetermined intervals;

counting, by the timer of the first microcomputer, time from a predetermined value which is set larger than the predetermined interval;

checking, by the first microcomputer, whether the time counted by the counting step is within a predetermined time range, the predetermined time rang having a beginning time point and an end time point, defined by the predetermined value and the predetermined interval; and

determining, by the first microcomputer, abnormality of monitor program execution when the time counted is outside the predetermined time range having the beginning time point and the end time point.

7. (currently amended) An electronic control method as in claim 6, further comprising:

changing, by the first microcomputer, the time counted to the predetermined value when the time counted is within the predetermined time range.

8. (previously amended) An electronic control method as in claim 7, wherein:

an abnormality is determined after the time counted reaches the predetermined value.

9. (currently amended) An electronic control method as in claim 7, wherein:

an abnormality is determined immediately when the time counted becomes outside the predetermined time range.